



## Vermont State Ethics Commission

### Meeting Minutes October 5, 2023 Remote Attendance\*

**1. Call to Order:** The regular meeting, held remotely via Zoom, was called to order by Christopher Davis at 10:05 A.M. Also present for the meeting were Commission members Sarah Biolsi Vangel, Michele Eid, Executive Director Christina Sivret, and Administrative Assistant Carolyn Desch. Chair Paul Erlbaum, and Commission member Sarah Butson were absent.

**2. Approval of Minutes:** The July 6, 2022, and September 7, 2022, meeting minutes were not approved due to a lack of a quorum of members who were also present at the July and September meetings.

**3. Public Comment:** None

**4. Executive Director's Report:**

**Training update:** CAPS has been working on an update to the CAPS/Ethics Commission ethics training which will be completed this month. The substance of the training will remain the same, but enhancements are being made to improve user experience. At this point in time, it appears that all three branches of government will require their employees and other public servants to take the CAPS/Ethics Commission training. The Executive Director will send hard copies of the training slides to Commission members for their reference. The training has not been approved for any outside continuing education credits, but the Executive Director will look into options for this further. Over the past few weeks, the Executive Director has received inquiries as to whether volunteer members of advisory committees, boards and commissions are required to take the training. The answer is "yes."

**Draft Advisory Opinion procedure:** The Commission reviewed the draft Advisory Opinion procedure, first considered last week, to confirm edits to the initial draft. On a motion made by Michele Eid and seconded by Sarah Vangel, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the procedure with the amendments discussed during the meeting.

**FY24 budget:** FY24 budget development is underway. The Commission's request reflects a 50% increase over last year's budget. This is mainly due to the addition of the Administrative Assistant position, as well as training development and associated third party contractor costs,

currently being paid out of one-time Commission start-up funds. This funding source will soon be depleted, and now that the statutory code of ethics is in place, there is an increased and continuing need for third party services related to training and technical development, specialized legal research, and outreach activities.

**Per diem increase:** FY24 budget instructions allow boards and commissions to request a per diem increase for members. Ethics Commission research shows the rate was last adjusted from \$30 to \$50 in 1986, which is the equivalent of approximately \$135 in today's dollars. Commission members discussed whether to request an increase, taking into consideration the nature of Commission service and the Commission's long-term ability to attract and retain new members. The general feeling was that a request balancing the public's interest in attracting highly qualified members to the Commission, while keeping expenses low, justified making a request, but for less than the full inflation-adjusted amount of \$135. On a motion made by Michele Eid and seconded by Sarah Vangel, the Commission unanimously voted to approve a request to raise the per diem to \$100.00.

**6. Executive Session:** The Commission did not enter Executive Session this meeting.

**7. Adjournment:** Michele Eid moved to adjourn, second by Sarah Vangel. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 A.M.